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Chair: Mr. Mezmur

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties

Combined initial to sixth periodic reports of Nauru (CRC/C/NRU/1-6, CRC/C/NRU/Q/1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Nauru took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Scotty** (Nauru), introducing the combined initial to sixth periodic reports of Nauru (CRC/C/NRU/1-6), said that Nauru was one of the world's smallest independent, democratic States. The population had twice been reduced to fewer than 1,000 people. Thus, Nauruans had experienced the struggle of having to rebuild their homes, communities and nation with a small population.

3. According to the 2011 census, the total population was 10,084, which represented a 9 per cent increase compared with 2006. Of that population, about 4,000 were below 15 years of age, and 1,948 were between 15 and 24 years of age.

4. In partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), her Government had completed a review of the child protection system in the country. That review had included an analysis of informal care practices as well as formal protection strategies, and it had encompassed all children in Nauru, including refugee and asylum-seeking children.

5. The review had led to the adoption of specific legislation on the promotion and protection of children in Nauru, known as the Child Protection and Welfare Act 2016. The core principle that served as the basis for implementation of the Act was the supremacy of the safety, well-being and best interests of the child.

6. The Child Protection Services Division had been established within the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2015, with the aim of providing child protection services to all children in Nauru, including refugee and asylum-seeking children. Eight staff member positions had been budgeted for, and thus far four of those positions had been filled. The work of the Division was supported by the Domestic Violence Unit of the Nauru Police Force, which was mandated to investigate, report and respond to victims of domestic violence and child abuse. The Government provided full financial support to the Child Protection Services Division, and financial assistance was also provided by UNICEF.

7. There had been a number of significant achievements in the area of legislative reform, including the enactment of the Cybercrime Act 2015, the Adoption of Children (Amended) Act 2015, the Naoero Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2015, the Refugees Convention Act 2012 and the Interpretation Act 2011. Policies promoting the rights of children had been used to further promote the specific interests of girls and other vulnerable groups of children.

8. The courts had applied the principles of the Convention in their decisions and deliberations. The prosecution had invoked the State's obligations under the Convention in several cases involving the indecent treatment of girls and indecent assault. One of those cases had resulted in a landmark decision that had provided for harsher penalties in cases where the victim was a child. The courts had also developed a child-friendly court system.

9. A 24-hour hotline was in place to provide assistance and counselling to victims of abuse. The Child Protection Policy Practice and Reporting Procedure and the Nauru Child Protection Strategy had also been established and were being implemented. The country had seven community play centres, which provided early childhood education and activities for children under 4 years of age.

10. The Department of Multicultural Affairs was mandated to address issues concerning refugees and asylum seekers. Currently, there were 67 boy refugees, 67 girl refugees, 26 boys and 13 girls seeking asylum in Nauru. A number of private service providers played an important role in the provision of welfare services to refugees and asylum seekers in Nauru. The Government of Australia had also provided support by, inter alia, offering specific training on child protection.

11. As at 30 August 2016, there were a total of 141 school-age asylum-seeking and refugee children enrolled in local Nauruan schools. Her Government continued to work with all school-age children and their parents to support school attendance. There were 28 former unaccompanied minors and 1 current unaccompanied minor who had not yet reached 18 years of age.

12. The promotion and protection of the rights of children with disabilities fell under the mandate of the Department of Education. Children with disabilities were not integrated into mainstream education; the Able Disabled Centre catered to their educational needs. Inclusive education would be progressively introduced in the coming years.

13. As a small island nation, Nauru faced challenges with regard to human resource capacity, a lack of financial and technical support, and a lack of statistical data. A significant amount of health data had been lost in a hospital fire. The Bureau of Statistics was working closely with relevant government departments on the collection of statistical data relating to children. Her Government would do all it could to ensure that the definition of the child set out in national laws and policies was in line with the Convention. The Government would follow approved legal processes in dealing with alleged cases of abuse and ill-treatment of refugees in Nauru. Her Government had been focused, strategic and deliberate in its implementation of the Convention, and it was doing the best it could with the limited resources available.

14. **Mr. Nelson** (Country Rapporteur) said that he welcomed the adoption of new legislation establishing increased penalties for the sexual abuse of children and new measures to protect children. He asked whether the Crimes Act 2016 and the Child Protection and Welfare Act 2016 had both entered fully into force. He also asked whether the Government was establishing child protection police units to deal with sexual offences against children and whether the officers in those units would receive specialized training.

15. He wished to know the current status of the family protection bill, which included important provisions on domestic violence and protection orders for women and child victims. He asked whether there were any plans to review the Guardianship of Children Act 1975 and bring it into line with the Convention. Noting that the new Code of Criminal Procedure provided for the establishment of a public defence office, he asked when the public defender would be appointed and whether that office would provide free legal representation to children in conflict with the law. The legislative reform currently under way provided an opportunity to lay the groundwork for an effective data-collection system.

16. With regard to the current efforts to incorporate into the Constitution provisions guaranteeing children's rights, he asked how the current strategy was different from the one used during a previous attempt at constitutional reform, which had been rejected by voters. He wished to know whether any consultations were held with tribal groups or other sectors of society and whether children were being included in those consultations.

17. He asked whether there was a comprehensive strategy in place to promote and protect the rights of children, and whether there were any national mechanisms to coordinate activities relating to children. He wished to know which ministry was responsible for children's affairs. He asked what proportion of the budget was allocated to programmes for children in marginalized and vulnerable situations, particularly children with disabilities and refugee and asylum-seeking children. He would appreciate information

on the current status of the ongoing talks with the Government of Samoa on the establishment of a national human rights institution.

18. He asked how marginalized children were included in the Government's efforts to raise awareness about children's rights. Information about any training on the Convention offered to police officers, judicial officials, teachers or other professionals would be welcome. The delegation should comment on the reports about restrictions being placed on civil society organizations and journalists attempting to research issues involving children's rights. The Committee was concerned to hear that some international organizations had been subjected to intimidation.

19. Lastly, while welcoming the new legislation that increased the age of marriage to 18 years, he asked the delegation to confirm whether the 1957 law allowing girls to marry at 16 years of age had been modified or repealed.

20. **Mr. Gastaud** (Country Rapporteur), noting that nationality, ethnic origin and other grounds were omitted from the list of prohibited grounds for discrimination as set out in the Constitution, asked whether the State party intended to revise that provision. The Committee had received reports of discrimination against the Chinese minority, adolescent mothers, and children with disabilities. Discrimination was exacerbated in the case of refugee children, who in practice were virtually excluded from the education and health-care systems.

21. He requested further information about how the principle of the best interests of the child was enshrined in national law and how that provision was implemented. Noting that children were at risk of drowning and of being injured or killed in traffic accidents, he asked what the Government was doing to protect children's right to life and keep them safe. He asked whether there had been any further stocktaking of the National Sustainable Development Strategy since 2009. He wished to know what was being done to improve the quality of the soil, which had been degraded by phosphate mining, and to ensure the availability of safe drinking water, which was sometimes contaminated by salt water or asbestos.

22. He enquired what measures were being taken to ensure that children's views were respected, as it seemed that the concept was not well understood in the State party. He wished to know whether there were any forums for dialogue in which children in Nauru could participate.

23. He asked whether it was compulsory for parents to register a child's birth within the 21-day time limit and, if it was, whether the failure to do so entailed a risk of statelessness. It would be helpful to know whether children born to refugees and asylum seekers were covered by the same registration system. With regard to the protection of identity, more information on the process by which children acquired citizenship would be welcome, in particular in the light of the fact that, pursuant to a law of 2015, a person was eligible for Nauruan citizenship only if he or she had been born in Nauru and had lived there for 20 years. Was the right of the children of refugees and asylum seekers to nationality recognized?

24. He wished to know whether anyone had yet been prosecuted under the Cybercrime Act 2015. Freedom of expression was not enshrined in law and, to his knowledge, no media outlets catered specifically to young people. Access to the Internet, including social networks, remained very limited. More information on the protection of the freedom of association and peaceful assembly would be welcome.

25. He enquired whether the death penalty had been abolished as part of the revision of the Criminal Code. Although corporal punishment had been banned in schools, the Criminal Code did not explicitly ban it. He would like an update on the commitment that

Nauru had made in the framework of the universal periodic review in 2011 to adopt a specific law banning domestic violence. Could the delegation also comment on reports that domestic violence was widespread in detention centres for refugees and asylum seekers?

26. **Ms. Sandberg** asked whether child abuse and violence against children were to some extent tolerated or accepted in Nauru. Had they been criminalized? In that connection, it would be helpful to know what steps had been taken to change cultural attitudes. If, as was her understanding, the results of the child protection review had not yet been made public, could the delegation explain why? She wished to know what other measures had been taken to prevent child abuse and violence against children and provide support services for victims. Was there a round-the-clock helpline for children and, if so, had an appropriate follow-up procedure been put in place?

27. **The Chair** said that, although State party report indicated the number of Nauruans aged under 15 years and the number aged between 15 and 24 years, it would be helpful if the delegation could inform the Committee of the total number of children in the country.

The meeting was suspended at 3.45 p.m. and resumed at 4.10 p.m.

28. **Ms. Scotty** (Nauru) said that the Child Protection and Welfare Act 2016 and the Crimes Act 2016 had both entered into force. A domestic violence unit had been established within the Nauru Police Force. It cooperated with government representatives responsible for child protection, women's affairs and health. Individuals who were not satisfied with the police's response to their concerns regarding the welfare of a child could turn to the Child Protection Services Division. She acknowledged the importance of establishing a child protection unit within the Nauru Police Force and would follow up on the matter on her return to the country. The Government provided the Child Protection Services Division with an annual budget of 363,257 Austrian dollars ($A) and they were responsible for the protection of Nauruan children only. The Australian authorities financed the provision of support for the children of refugees. Connect Settlement Services, the service provider responsible for settling refugees in Nauru, cooperated with the Child Protection Services Division to address issues such as parental abandonment and abuse. It was nevertheless important that the Department of Multicultural Affairs, which had overall responsibility for refugees and asylum seekers, remained closely involved in such matters.

29. The Nauru Police Force trained with and received assistance from the Australian Federal Police. Australian lawyers were also assisting the Justice Department with the drafting of a new police bill. Disaggregated data had not yet been collected in Nauru, but she acknowledged that they would be helpful. The Regional Rights Resource Team was involved in the process of preparing the Family Protection Act for adoption and, although the general election held several months previously had resulted in a slight delay, the Act was expected to be adopted in the coming months. Several government bodies and the United Nations Children's Fund had jointly conducted a nationwide consultation in advance of the adoption of the Child Protection and Welfare Act. The Nauru Youth Affairs Division and children from Nauru Secondary School had participated in the consultation process. Emphasis had been placed on raising awareness of the distinction between punishment and abuse, and training workshops had been organized for officials responsible for child welfare, including teachers and medical staff.

30. The Chinese nationals present in Nauru had entered the country for business purposes and did not hold Nauruan citizenship. With regard to the situation of journalists, it should be remembered that Nauru had been unjustly criticized in the media for its handling of the refugee situation. The negative media coverage had angered many Nauruans, which had made the situation even more difficult. As a result, a new visa regime had been introduced for media representatives. In principle, if journalists were less biased in their

reporting, it would be possible to permit them to enter the country free of charge. Nauru was working to improve the lives of refugees and ensure the protection of human rights.

31. No Nauruan children had drowned. They were generally confident swimmers and began learning to swim at a young age. However, one refugee had recently drowned. Lifeguards had been hired to protect refugees, many of whom could not swim. There had not been any traffic accidents recently, even though there were many cars in Nauru. The island had a desalination plant to supply potable water, but refugees and asylum seekers tended to drink bottled water instead. Although the Government sought to encourage the timely registration of births, it was possible to register a birth after 21 days.

32. **Ms. Aho Assouma** asked whether the process of streamlining the birth registration procedure had made it more accessible and what function the 21-day limit served if the late registration of a birth did not entail a penalty.

33. **Ms. Khazova** said that she wished to know whether fines were issued to the parents of children whose births had not been registered within the time limit. If so, how large were they? It would also be helpful to know whether a child who had not been issued with a birth certificate would face difficulties in accessing basic services, for example education and health care.

34. **The Chair** asked whether the introduction of a time limit for birth registration had been effective.

35. **Ms. Scotty** (Nauru) said that fines were not issued for late birth registration, but, as an incentive, a sum of $A 100 was awarded for timely registration.

36. The vast majority of the island's population owned a mobile phone and, contrary to popular belief, the people of Nauru did indeed enjoy access to social media and social networking platforms such as Facebook. Although the Government had attempted to discourage the use of such platforms, especially during the working day, in reality, their use was widespread. The Government had sought to restrict children's use of Facebook and other social media and social networking platforms in an effort to curb the growing phenomenon of revenge pornography, which was a matter of serious concern to parents.

37. **Ms. Khazova** asked whether children in Nauru enjoyed unrestricted access to the Internet.

38. **Ms. Winter** said that it would be helpful to know whether refugee children had the same rights and responsibilities as Nauruan children and whether they received equal treatment in all spheres of life in the country.

39. **Ms. Scotty** (Nauru) said that free wireless Internet was available in all schools. However, children could only use their mobile phones at certain times during the school day. All children in Nauru could access health care and education free of charge and on an equal footing. The Education Act prohibited the use of corporal punishment in schools and special training on that subject had been dispensed to teachers.

40. **Mr. Masaurua** (Nauru) said that the process of bringing the Guardianship of Children Act and other national laws into line with the provisions of the Convention, which would take place gradually, would begin once consultations had been held with the relevant government departments. The Public Defender's Office was fully functional and had a mandate to provide all persons living in Nauru, including refugees and asylum seekers, with free legal services and advice. The Government of Nauru had consulted the Office of the Ombudsman of the Government of Samoa on the establishment of a national human rights institution. However, the discussions had been discontinued following the recent adoption of the Leadership Code Act, which provided for the establishment of an ombudsman's office in Nauru. In view of the limited human and financial resources available to the

Government of Nauru, it had been decided to set up a unit specializing in human rights and gender issues within the ombudsman's office once it became operational. The committee that would be responsible for overseeing the establishment of the office as a whole had not yet been formed.

41. The Ministry of Home Affairs, working in partnership with the Department of Justice and Border Control, had launched targeted community outreach programmes to raise the awareness of women, children and young people and persons with disabilities of human rights issues concerning them. Human rights training was dispensed to members of the judiciary and parliamentarians on an ongoing basis. Some of the highest ranking members of the Nauruan judiciary had previously served as human rights advocates and judicial trainers elsewhere in the Pacific region and were therefore well placed to design training programmes and to provide training on issues falling within their area of expertise, which included children's rights and child protection. The Director of Public Prosecutions and the Public Defender's Office were also involved in providing human rights training. Most major human rights issues were covered by the country's continuing legal education programme.

42. The new Child Protection and Welfare Act had raised the legal minimum age for marriage to 18 years. Although there was no specific ministry for children in Nauru, the Ministry of Home Affairs, acting through, inter alia, the Department of Education, bore primary responsibility for and had a specific mandate to deal with children's issues. A coordinating committee composed of representatives of the various government departments provided technical assistance and took policy and legislative decisions on children's issues.

43. Following a comprehensive legislative review, the Government had begun the process of bringing all relevant laws and policies into line with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and was planning to draft legislation that would better cater to the specific needs of all persons with disabilities, including children, living in Nauru. Regrettably, the delegation was unable to provide the statistical information requested by the Committee at that time but would endeavour to submit it in the near future. As data collection and analysis continued to pose a significant challenge to the Government, it would be useful to receive technical assistance from the Committee in that area.

44. The health-care entitlement of refugees differed somewhat from that of asylum seekers in that asylum seekers could only access dedicated international health-care services whereas refugees enjoyed full access to all public health-care services available. The Government of Nauru was grateful to the Government of Australia for its assistance in building a new, state-of-the-art hospital, which provided a full range of health-care services to Nauruan citizens and refugees alike.

45. The possibility of holding another constitutional referendum was still being considered. The Government of Nauru would be grateful to the Committee for any technical assistance that it could provide in ensuring that children's rights were fully incorporated into the Constitution. Under the Interpretation Act, the Government of Nauru was required to apply the principles enshrined in international human rights treaties and to give effect to findings of judicial reviews. It had also used the relevant provisions of the Act to effect a number of changes within the judiciary.

46. The Government was aware of the need to strengthen its relationship with civil society and to form partnerships with the different NGOs operating in the country, which did not have a specific mandate. In Nauru, community work was carried out mostly by faith-based organizations, youth groups and women's groups. Moreover, there was an

organization for persons with disabilities that actively promoted their interests and advocated the inclusion of a disability perspective in relevant laws and policies.

47. In practice, it had proven difficult to give full effect to the principle of respect for the views of the child enshrined in the Convention, as it was often at variance with the prevailing philosophy in Nauru that, in certain circumstances, children should be seen and not heard. The Government fully recognized the need for children to be heard and to participate in family decisions and was striving to strike a balance between guaranteeing those rights in practice and preserving parents' traditional role as primary decision makers.

48. The Government had adopted a number of legislative and policy measures and had undertaken awareness-raising and prevention activities at the community level in an attempt to address the pervasive phenomenon of domestic violence in Nauru. Close cooperation with the national police and the effective enforcement of relevant legislation and policies were the key to combating that phenomenon effectively. The Family Protection Act was in the final stages of drafting and, once completed, would be submitted to Cabinet and then to Parliament for adoption. The Act was progressive in that it reflected many of the principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and introduced the obligation for service providers, such as police officers and health-care professionals, to file a complaint if they became aware of acts of violence occurring in the family setting.

49. The policies in place to combat gender-based violence included a policy to tackle sexual harassment and a robust gender policy, which was being mainstreamed in the work of all relevant government departments.

50. Cases of child abuse were generally handled by the Child Protection Services Division and Victims Support Service. The Integrated Case Coordination Committee bore overall responsibility for cases of domestic violence and child protection issues.

51. As part of the Government's efforts to raise awareness of children's rights, the Department of Education had designed and run a teacher training programme on children's rights, which made specific reference to the Convention.

52. **Ms. Scotty** (Nauru) said that, to her knowledge, all the refugees arriving on the island of Nauru held the citizenship of their country of origin and had no desire to become Nauruan citizens. The Citizenship Act had been amended in 2015 to facilitate the acquisition of Nauruan citizenship by and the legal adoption of stateless Chinese children, especially girls. They had been abandoned by their biological parents on account of the one-child policy in force in China at the time of their birth and had lived in Nauru for many years and been raised by Nauruan citizens.

53. The failure of the 2010 constitutional referendum had been chiefly attributable to inadequate preparation and to the format and wording of the question of the referendum being too restrictive, which had effectively deprived voters of the possibility of accepting some amendments and rejecting others.

54. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** asked whether children, who were often the victims of domestic violence, were part of the campaigns being conducted to raise the awareness of teachers, police officers and health-care professionals of that phenomenon. It would also be useful to learn whether child victims of domestic violence were routinely informed of their rights and how to vindicate them.

55. **Mr. Gastaud** asked whether children who had been born in Nauru to refugee or asylum seeker parents and who were effectively stateless could be granted Nauruan citizenship. He would also like to hear about the measures taken by the State party to

enshrine the principle of respect for the views of the child in law and to enforce it in practice.

56. **The Chair** said that it would be helpful to receive additional information on the non-legislative measures taken by the State party to combat the phenomenon of domestic violence in Nauru, including in schools, and on the impact of those measures. He also wished to know whether the outcome of the court cases mentioned in the head of delegation's introductory statement had been influenced by the application of the Interpretation Act. Noting that a large amount of statistical information on health had been lost when the previous national hospital had burned down, he asked what measures the State party had put in place to prevent the loss of such essential data in the future.

57. **Ms. Scotty** (Nauru) said that the Government planned to conduct campaigns to raise the awareness of child victims of domestic violence about their rights once the campaigns targeting teachers, police officers and health-care professionals had come to an end. The Government accorded top priority to educating the adults who were most likely to come into contact with those children about the need to report abuse.

58. The Citizenship Act had been amended in 2015 primarily to assist children who had been abandoned. Children born in Nauru to refugee parents who held the citizenship of their country of origin were also considered to be citizens of that country and so were not normally granted Nauruan citizenship. The Government attached great importance to the preservation of data and was taking steps to preserve land records and statistical information on health.

59. **Mr. Masaurua** (Nauru) said that school liaison officers were responsible for looking after children's best interests inside and outside school. The officers were trained to spot the tell-tale signs of domestic abuse and were obliged to report confirmed and suspected instances of that phenomenon to the school principal, who then referred the matter to the education authorities, which contacted the police if necessary. There had been cases in which children had reported domestic abuse directly to the Child Protection Services Division.

60. The school curriculum included a human rights component and made specific mention of children's rights and responsibilities under the Convention. The outcome of the court cases mentioned in the introductory statement had been the direct result of the application of the Interpretation Act.

61. The Government had identified a statistician who could begin to collect statistical data on health and education, and planned to hire an international consultant to set up a reliable data-collection system within the Bureau of Statistics.

62. Although no legislative measures had been adopted to enshrine the principle of respect for the views of the child, in Nauru it was customary to give children an opportunity to express their opinion on matters concerning them in practice, especially at school. However, in spite of that concession, primary decision-making power still rested with the child's parents.

63. **Ms. Sandberg** asked the State party to clarify whether there was a hotline that children could use to report cases of violence or to discuss confidential matters.

64. **Mr. Nelson**, noting that free Wi-Fi was available in all schools, asked whether children were allowed to take their mobile phones to school. He also asked what proportion of the budget for the Ministry of Home Affairs was allocated to the Nauru Youth Affairs Division.

65. **Ms. Scotty** (Nauru) said that a budget of $A 5 million was allocated to education and that the Child Protection Services Division had a budget of more than $A 300,000,

which included funding from UNICEF. Much of the funding was used for consultants, training and special projects, such as awareness-raising campaigns regarding children's rights.

66. A hotline had recently been set up with the assistance of the Australian Border Force. The hotline was linked to the police department and could be used to report cases of domestic violence against women.

67. **Ms. Sandberg** asked whether there was a hotline specifically for children, which was not linked to the police and not necessarily related to reporting criminal matters.

68. **Ms. Scotty** (Nauru) reiterated that the hotline was intended to enable women to report cases of domestic violence and did not provide counselling. Children in need of assistance often preferred to go to the Child Protection Services Division, which was child friendly. The Division would then contact the police, if necessary.

69. **Ms. Sandberg** enquired about the services available to children who were victims of abuse.

70. **Ms. Scotty** (Nauru) said that children who filed complaints with the Child Protection Services Division could go to a safe house while their complaints were being processed by the courts. The safe house offered counselling and would take the children to hospital, if necessary.

71. **Mr. Gastaud** said he welcomed the fact that education was compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 16 and asked which areas of education were being addressed under the Plan of Action for Children. He also asked whether young mothers were encouraged to go back to school, and what steps the State party was taking to combat school dropouts and absenteeism and to provide sufficient training to teachers. He asked what the roles of school captains and vice-captains were and whether such persons were elected.

72. There was only one school for persons with disabilities on the island and the school did not have specialized teachers. Moreover, the students were persons between the ages of 3 and 34, which might not be in the best interest of either the children or the adults. Were there any instances in which children with disabilities were not schooled?

73. **Mr. Nelson** said that prenatal and postnatal care was limited. Noting that bottle-feeding seemed to be prevalent, he asked whether efforts were being made to raise awareness about the benefits of breastfeeding. He also asked whether the State party was providing sex education in schools or making contraceptives readily available to teenagers in order to combat the high rate of teenaged pregnancies, and whether any measures were being taken to address the high level of alcohol and substance abuse among children.

74. The Committee had received reports that some asylum-seeking and refugee children had developed chronic conditions as a result of living in overcrowded and unsanitary camps. He enquired what measures were being taken improve the living conditions inside the camps, what criteria were used to determine whether asylum seekers and refugees should live inside or outside the camps, and what sort of housing was provided to those living outside.

75. Referring to the reports of child abuse within the camps, he asked what steps were being taken to put an end to such abuse and to provide support to the victims, how many reports of abuse had been investigated and how many cases had gone to court.

76. He wished to know what would be the fate of the asylum seekers and refugees living in Nauru when the camps closed at the end of February 2017. He also wished to know whether the Vulnerable Children's Meeting Committee relating to asylum-seeking children had ever met or referred any cases to the police and what its mandate was.

77. He asked whether the Immigration Act 2014 criminalized the sale and trafficking of children and whether protection and rehabilitation was provided to victims of trafficking. He wondered whether measures were being taken to combat the sexual abuse of children. The Committee had received reports that complaints were often withdrawn by the victims and therefore the cases never went to court. The State party should provide more information on public awareness programmes in that regard.

78. With regard to juvenile justice, he asked whether separate facilities were provided for juvenile offenders and, if so, how many offenders were being held in such facilities. Were there any juvenile courts? Were there separate safe houses for children who were victims of crime?

79. **Ms. Khazova** said that she would welcome information on the reasons why so many children were deprived of a family environment. She asked whether there were any specific criteria for removing children from their families or allowing them to stay; whether counselling or support was available to the families concerned; and whether any measures were in place to prevent child removals. She also asked whether, in connection with the Family Protection Act, there were any plans to improve the living conditions in the institutions where children were placed or to develop family placements. Referring to the report, she asked whether the law could be amended so that both parents, and not just the mother, would be considered guardians of their children even if they were not married.

80. On the issue of unaccompanied children, she asked why asylum-seeking and refugee children were often separated from their parents and whether efforts were being made to reunite them with their families. She also asked whether unaccompanied children were placed in institutions or put up for adoption. The Committee would welcome information on adoption in Nauru. Was adoption even permitted? Was it widespread or regulated? Was intercountry adoption allowed?

81. **Ms. Aho Assouma** asked what portion of the budget was allocated to health care and whether the delegation could provide more specific statistics on the infant, child and maternal mortality rates in Nauru. She asked why 2 per cent of children were not vaccinated; what steps were being taken to prevent child obesity and teenaged pregnancy; and whether measures were in place to assist mothers and children with HIV and to provide them with access to antiretroviral therapy. With reference to the high consumption of tobacco and alcohol among children, she asked what measures were being taken to reduce their consumption and whether anyone had been prosecuted for selling tobacco or alcohol to children.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.